

gamic Laboratory of the same university, and by the Herbarium of Columbia College is warmly to be commended. The series of papers emanating from these places bears a uniform title and each paper its serial number and sub-title, of which the first article in this issue is an example. By this plan any institution which desires advertising can secure it and at the same time utilize the ordinary channels for obtaining publicity for its investigations.

Or the plan adopted by the Johns-Hopkins University in the publications of its "circulars," and the similar one lately put into operation by the University of Minnesota in its "Quarterly Bulletin" are even more to be commended. In these there appear abstracts of any papers published by students or members of the faculty, with references to the place of publication. They also give opportunity for the inclusion of accounts of university organization and work, and many items of interest to alumni and educators. They thus serve admirably to show what the institutions are doing, and as advertising media could not be improved; while at the same time, instead of adding to the scattered publications which must be kept track of, they actually help to direct the student to the literature he seeks.

By all means let the botanists of our larger institutions endeavor to prevent so far as possible the troublesome scattering of botanical papers.

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## CURRENT LITERATURE.

### \* Western Grasses.

The "Grasses of the Southwest", lately completed, put into the hands of agrostologists 100 plates illustrating the chief species of the arid regions of the south western United States. It is quickly followed by part 1 of the "Grasses of the Pacific Slope",<sup>1</sup> in which fifty of the larger and economically important species are figured. The second part is expected to follow soon and when completed this will be the second volume of the "Illustrations of North American Grasses." Most of the species figured have not been illustrated before. The plates of this part are a decided improvement upon those of the second part of the first volume, even as these were better than the first. They are

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<sup>1</sup>VASEY, GEORGE—Grasses of the Pacific Slope, including Alaska and the adjacent islands. Plates and descriptions of the grasses of California, Oregon, Washington and the northwestern coast including Alaska. Bulletin 13, Div. of Bot., Dep't of Agric. Issued Oct. 20, 1892. Imp. 8° pl. 50. Washington. Gov't Printing Office.

lithographs by Meisel, who undoubtedly does the best work in this line of any man in the country.

The descriptions are drawn up mostly by Mr. L. H. Dewey, an assistant botanist of the division.

We have much commendation for the work, and but two adverse criticisms. It is a pity that a fuller synonymy is not given, with critical notes. The plates are valuable indeed; but their value would be much enhanced by such study, with in some cases more minute and thorough dissection of flowers. However if we cannot have a whole loaf we ought to give thanks for the half.

The second criticism relates to purely mechanical details. The plates of the second part of the first volume were nearly ruined by close trimming and these are cut too close also. Why not leave edges uncut, so that one trimming when bound would suffice? Such plates deserve a broad margin, rather than a "skimpy" one.

#### A new publication.

The botanical laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania begins a new serial entitled "Contributions from the botanical laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania."<sup>1</sup> Several similar publications having come to our attention recently, together with propositions for the establishment of others, we are moved to give expression to our views in the editorial pages on the general advisability of such issues by educational institutions.

This first number is admirably got up. The typography and paper is excellent and the plates are good.

The longest paper is by Dr. Macfarlane on *Dionæa muscipula* and is directed to a study of the irritability of the leaves. This is followed by a short paper on bud propagation in *Dionæa*, which Mr. Harshberger found to occur occasionally in the inflorescence. There are two papers by Dr. Wilson, one on the dioecism and proportion of staminate and pistillate flowers in *Epigæa repens*; the other (with the assistance of Mr. Greenman) on the movements of the leaves of *Melilotus alba* and other plants. In these researches Dr. Wilson finds that *Melilotus* and many other plants have a "hot sun" position for their leaves which is dependent largely upon the heat rays and the water supply, since it is intended to protect plants from excessive evaporation. Dr. Rothrock has two short notes, one on a monstrous form of *Rudbeckia hirta*, and the other on a nascent variety of *Brunella vulgaris*. Finally there is a chemical paper on mangrove bark tannin by Dr. Trimble, who finds this tannin quite similar to that in horse-chestnut, tormentil and rhatany.

<sup>1</sup>Philadelphia: Univ. of Pa. Press. 1892. vol. 1. no. 1. 8vo, pp. 73, pl. 13.

## Minor notices.

THE SECOND BULLETIN of the U. S. Division of Vegetable Pathology<sup>1</sup> is devoted to a detailed preliminary report upon the California vine disease, which appeared in sufficient amount to attract attention in 1884 and 1885. Since then its spread has been rapid until 20,000 to 25,000 acres of vineyards in S. California have been devastated. The cause of the disease has not yet been discovered. This report gives an account of the incubation and spread of the disease; its characteristics and its relation to various supposed causes. It seems most nearly related to *rougeot* and *folletage*.

PROFESSOR L. H. PAMMEL has distributed copies of an elaborately illustrated lecture on the "Pollination of Flowers"<sup>2</sup> delivered at the January meeting of the Iowa Horticultural Society. The collation of useful illustrations (though these are wretchedly printed) and the most important literature bearing on this subject makes the pamphlet a very useful one to teachers. Two other short papers, "Cross and self-fertilization in plants" and "The effects of cross-fertilization in plants" are also included in the pamphlet.

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 OPEN LETTERS.

## The Botanical Congress.

Since opinions are asked regarding an American Botanical Congress at Madison next year, I give mine briefly and categorically as follows:

1. By all means we must have a congress. Foreign botanists are expecting it, the time is ripe for it, and properly arranged, I believe that we will be able to secure a large and representative foreign delegation.

2. The success of the congress will depend *very largely* on the selection of a *live* general manager or secretary who will not be trammelled in his action by too much *a priori* machinery. He must be given power to act, if necessary, promptly *because* independently.

3. Action should be taken at once to secure a meeting of the International Committee on Nomenclature appointed at Genoa, in connection with next year's congress.

4. A program containing a *few* topics of general interest to botanists throughout the world should be announced at an early date. Now that nomenclature is practically settled, we are in a position to appreciate the fact that there are other matters of more importance, some of which may well be discussed in such a presence.

<sup>1</sup>Washington: Gov. Printing Office: 1892. 8°. pp. 222. pl. xxv. chart 2.

<sup>2</sup>Apparently privately printed. pp. 57. figs 45.